

Serial No. 09/609,163

-- 50. (New) A stent in the form of a generally tubular structure having a longitudinal axis, the stent comprising:

a plurality of circumferential sets of strut members that extend in a generally circumferential, ring-like pattern around the stent's longitudinal axis with each circumferential set of strut members comprising a plurality of curved end struts, the curved end struts being substantially curved across their entire length;

a plurality of flexible links with each flexible link being fixedly attached to two adjacent circumferential sets of strut members and each flexible link having a proximal end and a distal end with a line drawn through the proximal and distal ends of the flexible link lying transverse to the stent's longitudinal axis, each flexible link having at least four generally longitudinal extending curved segments that each have a proximal end and a distal end with a line joining the proximal end and distal end of each curved segment being generally parallel to the stent's longitudinal axis, the curved segments being connected together in series by three generally circumferentially extending segments of approximately equal length; and

the stent being further characterized by having the outermost curved segment of each flexible link connected to each curved end strut at a point thereon, the tangent to the curved end segment at which point being at an acute angle with respect to the stent's longitudinal axis as taken in the direction of the curved end strut that is opposite the curved end strut onto which the outermost curved end segment is attached.

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51. (New) The stent of claim 50 wherein the width of the each flexible link is less than the width of each curved end strut.
52. (New) The stent of claim 50 wherein the ratio of thickness to width of each flexible link is greater than 1.0.
53. (New) The stent of claim 50 wherein the link is formed from stainless steel.
54. (New) The stent of claim 50 wherein the link is formed in the shape of a letter "N". —

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REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 50-54 remain in this application. Claims 33-49 have been canceled. As now claimed, each flexible link on the stent is connected to the curved end struts of one of the plurality of sets of strut members, as arranged circumferentially about the stent. (This arrangement can be seen in Figures 2 and 4-9 of the present application.) The link is placed along the stent transverse to the stent longitudinal axis. Further, the outermost curved segment is connected to the curved end strut at an acute angle with respect to the longitudinal axis of the stent. This arrangement helps to reduce the occurrence of flaring of the struts as compared to prior art stents, allowing the operator the option of placing the stent by direct stenting without pre-dilatation of the arterial stenosis.